The Progressive Review

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How to survive the rest of the Clinton administration

If this was a just world, Bill Clinton would resign, Al From and the New Democrats would settle a product liability suit for selling defective politics by taking a vow of perpetual silence, the entire Democratic congressional leadership would be arrested for loitering on federal property, and every journalist who told us how wonderful life would be under Clinton would commit themselves to at least 1000 hours of community service.

Since, however, this isn't a just world, we will settle for suggesting a few ways to survive the duration of the Reagan-Bush-Clinton era. Some of what follows was proposed at the commencement of the Bush administration, but unfortunately seems to be still applicable.

Give back the power: Here was the great silent issue of the election -- not just what is to be decided but who gets to decide it. For the past few decades, Washington has been hoarding power at an extraordinary rate. When it was not adding to its power, it was telling states and localities what to do with theirs. The 9th and 10th Amendments, designed to preserve the natural rights of citizens as well as the sovereign powers of states, are in shambles. Here are a few starter policies to reverse this unconstitutional flow:

- Return the National Guard to the full control of the governors.
- Allow states to set their own highway speed limits
- Pay for the elevators the feds say small town school districts and other financially strapped public institutions have to install to comply with federal disability laws, or else drop the requirement.
- Stop the EPA's new auto emissions testing program under which drivers can be suddenly hit with large repair bills. If you want clean cars, require Detroit to build them; don't make hapless citizens do the job for you.

These are not the most important changes, but they would be a symbolic down-payment on the needed redistribution of the country's political power. Democrats worried about whether they are allowed to do such things should re-read Jefferson.

It's still the economy: The economists said the economy was getting better; the people said we were still in a recession. The people were right because whatever growth has occurred didn't include them.

It's been some years since there has been a major political voice representing the interests of ordinary workers. The basic reason for this is that both major parties are now primarily funded by the workers' employers.

The quickest way back to the voters' hearts is through a politics based on the real needs of the average American employee. Such a politics would puncture the hypocrisy of current economic rhetoric -- which speaks of retraining but not of the job loss that makes it necessary, or which conceals the issue of chronically depressed wages and benefits in warm babble about the virtues of competitiveness and productivity. Such a politics would address such issues as workplace safety, production speedups, uncompensated overtime, the grim normalcy of the 2-to-4-job family, and the need for a shorter workweek. It would also address the fact that all Fortune 500 companies are planning to downsize over the next five years. It would be a politics based on the needs of the people rather than upon those of their elites.

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Bucking the system since 1966

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Get an agenda: If progressives can't state clearly what they believe in, who can blame the public for being confused? There is a need for a progressive platform, preferably one that can be written on one side of a sheet of paper.

Form coalitions: Since the seventies there has been a tremendous splintering of progressives into single issue groups. Meanwhile, they have forgotten how to work in coalition with one another and seem incapable of providing a holistic vision of that for which they are striving. Like Disraeli's description of liberals, they can't lead; they won't follow and they refuse to cooperate.

Consider yourself part of the mainstream and not a permanent exile: The corporate right -- and journalists employed by it -- have fostered the notion that anyone left of themselves is out of the mainstream. Don't believe it. It is masochism, untrue and bad politics. The day that George Will is in the mainstream is the day the 7-11 starts selling watercress sandwiches.

Fight on your ground, not theirs: What's amazing about the right is not that it has finally won, but that it has taken so long. For fifteen years, the Democrats have happily agreed to talk about the right's favorite issues rather than their own. It's hard to win an argument that way.

Give the American family value, not values: American families have moral values; what they're losing is economic value. The alternative to the right's moral demagoguery is an economic plan that helps ordinary citizens rather than multinational corporations. If there was such a plan, you wouldn't be hearing so much about Christian fundamentalism. After all, sixty years ago there were plenty of Christian fundamentalists in this country. Only back then they were called Democrats.

Don't be afraid of conscience: One of the reasons we're in our current predicament is because the Vichy Democrats thought victory lay in being tougher, meaner, and more stingy than the Republicans. They lost that race and now the country is in the hands of the nastiest little-minded men this country has seen since the 1920s. Reflecting upon the situation, the Democratic Abandonship Council -- egged on by the corporate press -- now proposes that the Democrats work even harder at becoming tougher, mean and stingy. They're beginning to sound like George Bush who once called for a stronger death penalty.

Don't listen to them. The real alternative is common decency and common sense. Americans have a conscience; it's just that no one has asked them to exercise it in a long while. Besides, the media needs something to

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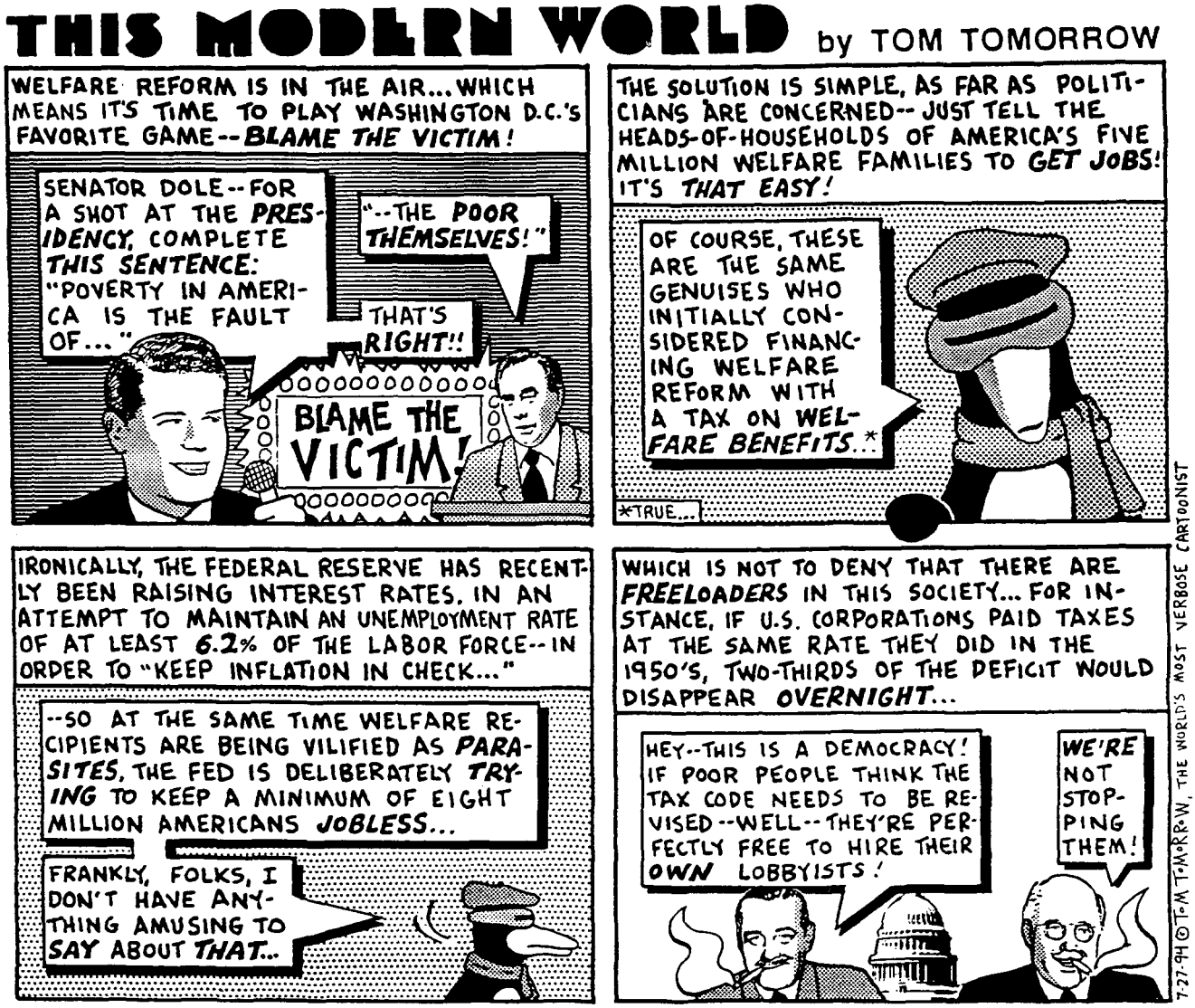
THIS MODERN WORLD by TOM TOMORROW
WELFARE REFORM IS IN THE AIR... WHICH MEANS IT'S TIME TO PLAY WASHINGTON D.C.'s FAVORITE GAME--BLAME THE VICTIM!
SENATOR DOLE--FOR A SHOT AT THE PRESIDENCY, COMPLETE THIS SENTENCE: "POVERTY IN AMERICA IS THE FAULT OF..."
"--THE POOR THEMSELVES!"
THAT'S RIGHT!!
BLAME THE VICTIM!
THE SOLUTION IS SIMPLE, AS FAR AS POLITICIANS ARE CONCERNED--JUST TELL THE HEADS-OF-HOUSEHOLDS OF AMERICA'S FIVE MILLION WELFARE FAMILIES TO GET JOBS! IT'S THAT EASY!
OF COURSE, THESE ARE THE SAME GENUISES WHO INITIALLY CONSIDERED FINANCING WELFARE REFORM WITH A TAX ON WELFARE BENEFITS..*
*TRUE...
IRONICALLY, THE FEDERAL RESERVE HAS RECENTLY BEEN RAISING INTEREST RATES, IN AN ATTEMPT TO MAINTAIN AN UNEMPLOYMENT RATE OF AT LEAST 6.2% OF THE LABOR FORCE--IN ORDER TO "KEEP INFLATION IN CHECK..."
--SO AT THE SAME TIME WELFARE RECIPIENTS ARE BEING VILIFIED AS PARASITES, THE FED IS DELIBERATELY TRYING TO KEEP A MINIMUM OF EIGHT MILLION AMERICANS JOBLESS...
FRANKLY, FOLKS, I DON'T HAVE ANYTHING AMUSING TO SAY ABOUT THAT...
WHICH IS NOT TO DENY THAT THERE ARE FREELOADERS IN THIS SOCIETY... FOR INSTANCE, IF U.S. CORPORATIONS PAID TAXES AT THE SAME RATE THEY DID IN THE 1950's, TWO-THIRDS OF THE DEFICIT WOULD DISAPPEAR OVERNIGHT...
HEY--THIS IS A DEMOCRACY! IF POOR PEOPLE THINK THE TAX CODE NEEDS TO BE REVISED--WELL--THEY'RE PERFECTLY FREE TO HIRE THEIR OWN LOBBYISTS!
WE'RE NOT STOPPING THEM!
7-27-94 ©TOM TOMORROW, THE WORLD'S MOST VERBOSE CARTOONIST

write about after Newt Gingrich self-destructs. The politics of conscience could well be the next trend.

When they talk family, talk community back: The semiotics of rightwing rhetoric attempts to inculcate a sense of isolation. This sense feeds a politics of fear, avoidance of others, and selfishness. It suggests that we can really not trust anyone except those closest to us. This is not a new phenomenon; de Tocqueville wrote of Americans that "each person behaves as though he is a stranger to the destiny of all the others. . . As for his transactions with his fellow citizens, he may mix among them, but does not feel them; he exists only in himself and for himself alone. And if on these terms there remains in his mind a sense of family, there no longer remains a sense of society."

The alternative to such isolation was found millennia ago when families and individuals discovered they were safer, better off and stronger coming together in small groups. This still works even though the right has convinced many Americans that they have no choice but to huddle afraid and alone around the fire in the dark. The power and hope of strong communities is the best antidote to the right's attempt to fragment and frighten our citizens.

Don't be afraid of popular issues: One striking difference between old-style New Dealers and new-style progressives is that the former had a knack of finding popular issues. This is not to say that unpopular causes should be avoided, but simply to suggest that it is okay to leaven the difficult and the controversial with things people actually want.

Speak United States: Many progressives speak in the tongues of governmentese, poligabble and media slang. The people we are trying to convince speak United States; it helps to do the same.

Don't let others speak in code: One of the reasons hate is having such a field day is because prominent Americans -- including Bill Clinton, GOP governors and network correspondents -- are allowed to speak with impunity in an ethnically-charged code that panders to and

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One reason the GOP won

Percent of Americans who think welfare is the largest expenditure the federal government makes:
19%
Percent of Americans who think foreign aid is the largest expenditure the federal government makes:
27%
Actual percent of federal outlays:
Welfare (AFDC): 1%
Foreign aid: 2%

FURTHERMORE. . .

Percent of welfare recipients who are black
38%
Percentage of welfare recipients who have only one or two children
72%
Percentage of welfare recipients who are under the age of 20
8%
Average number of children in families on welfare:
2
Decline in average welfare benefits since 1975 in constant dollars:
37%
Number of states in which welfare benefits plus food stamps bring recipients up to the poverty level:
0

Sources: Harvard School of Public Health and the Kaiser Family Foundation; Bob Herbert in the *New York Times*; Ruth Siedel, professor sociology at Hunter College, in the *Nation*.

exacerbates the more plain-spoken fears of ordinary Americans. Governor Weld of Massachusetts, for example, doesn't use ethnic epithets; he's too well-bred for that. Instead he proposes forced labor for those on welfare more than 60 days. And everyone knows just who he is talking about.

Instead of going after the politically incorrect on talk shows and college campuses, it would be far more useful to strip the well-mannered demagogues of their protection. The Welds of America should be seen as they are: David Dukes armed with euphemisms rather than epithets.

Describe a future worth fighting for: Optimism is deeply ingrained in American culture. Progressives should not surrender optimism to the reactionaries. Thomas Jefferson said, "My theory has always been that if we are to dream, the flatteries of hope are as cheap, and pleasanter than the gloom of despair." It was this view that helped fuel the runaway election year of 1936, when the Democrats labeled Republicans as "disciples of despair" floundering in a "fountain of fear." Roosevelt himself got considerable mileage by the unsupported but agreeable assertion that we had nothing to fear but fear itself.

Get rid of the lawyers: Adopting alternative approaches to dispute resolution is a good way to make life in America more rational. Too many laws are written by too many lawyers providing perpetual employment for too many of their fellow law school alumni. The way these laws have been written has contributed to the growing nastiness with which we treat one another. Replacing lawyerly solutions with mediated ones would not only create a better democracy, it would undermine those who thrive on cultural and political division.

Be frugal: Both liberals and conservatives spend too much money on the wrong things when they are in office. Since World War II, in fact, Republican have increased the national debt at a far greater rate than Democrats But few know it, in part because those left of center are afraid of seeming frugal. The irony of this is that many programs get rejected not because they are unworthy but because they are managed badly.

Stop dissin' white males: As power has shifted away from white males, their real income, as for other Americans, has declined. They are worried and scared. Is it any wonder that they tend to vote for politicians who show them some respect? The last election seems a pretty high price to pay for the ethnic and sexual ego satisfaction of beating up on white males. It is also a reminder that treating everyone with the same dignity one wishes for oneself ultimately produces the best politics.

Go for redemption before recrimination: Martin Luther King said of segregationists in the south that you had work on the assumption that one day you would be friends with the people against whom you are fighting. The south is a much healthier place today because King believed in redemption in politics as well as in religion. Progressives have to fight so hard to win that the sometimes forget that their antagonists are, in the end, only wrong -- a universal, if disappointing, human trait. Thinking of those opposed to us as potential converts rather than certain enemies may increase the former and lessen the latter.

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Oh yes. One last thing. The next time a smooth talking hustler like Bill Clinton comes to the door, don't let him in. Stick with politicians you know-- *Sam Smith*

The gadfly thing

I was recently described in a kind article in Washington's *City Paper* as a "political gadfly." This was neither the first time nor will it be the last. It has happened to me so often that I was able to tell the writer where the word came from (a fly that bites and annoys cattle). In fact, it has happened to me so often that I even have a rowboat called the *Gadfly*.

But being called a gadfly is a little like being bitten by one. It's also, notes Jon Rowe, like Ralph Nader being called a "self-appointed consumer advocate." Where, Rowe wonders, does one go to get a license to become an properly appointed consumer advocate?

People in Washington who call other people gadflies tend to be either *players* or people who wish they were. A player is someone trying to be Assistant Secretary of HUD, someone who represents a major polluter and claims to practice environmental law, someone who is paid large sums of money to shout down Eleanor Clift on national TV or who pays large sums of money to get politicians to wrestle with -- and ultimately defeat -- their own conscience. Players are annoyed by gadflies because they won't play according to the players' rules. On the other hand, gadflies don't clutter up the bureaucracy making dull speeches, and they don't create toxic waste sites or corrupt the political system. They tend to eat Mr. Tyson's chicken rather than fly on his planes. And at the end of the day, they have less explaining to do to their children.

Players tend to be quite insecure which is why they need such an elaborate support system, including the *Washingtonian* magazine, the Gridiron Dinner, the *Washington Post* Style section and the Diane Riem Show. Players consider themselves serious; gadflies not. Russell Baker, a serious man, addressed this matter best in a column in which he pointed out the difference between being serious and being solemn. Baker observed that children are almost always serious, but that they start to lose the trait in adolescence. Washington is the capital of solemnity and few of its elite are truly serious.

Gadflies, on the other hand, are usually serious. A gadfly tends to be someone with ideas, energy and a modicum of talent but who lacks a PR firm, ghostwriter and a proper flair for networking. A gadfly is someone who actually wants to get something done, but often can't -- largely because of all the players in the way.

EF Schumacher once said, "We must do what we conceive to be the right thing, and not bother our heads or burden our souls with whether we are going to be successful. Because if we don't do the right thing, we'll be doing the wrong thing, and we will just be part of the disease, and not a part of the cure."

Gadflies would agree. They think for themselves. But in Washington thought is something players purchase, just like they purchase gas, condoms or political access. People who think are considered part of the service industry with commensurate compensation and social regard.

Take a run-of-the-mill gadfly such as myself and then some average players -- say the editorial board the *Washington Post* -- and compare their records over a couple of decades. The gadfly approach to freeways, urban policy, Vietnam, the environment and Bill Clinton will, I think, hold up pretty well. The problem gadflies face is not that they are irrelevant or wrong but that their timing is a bit off. The FBI used to categorize members of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade as "premature anti-fascists." Similarly, many gadflies are just moderates of an age that has not yet arrived. -- *s.s.*

Making your own money

By David Burman

Three years ago Jeanne was on welfare. Now she operates almost entirely outside the normal economy, thanks to a simple barter network called a local employment trading system or LETS. With LETS, instead of waiting for money to trickle down from somewhere else, Jeanne creates her own money through a medium of exchange called "green dollars." She contributes her skills as a healer and musician to the well-being of the community in exchange for the same green dollars. Since green dollars are always in abundant supply, anyone can afford her services.

Too good to be true? It's simple. It's elegant. It's available. And it's an idea that's working in about 500 communities around the world.

The idea of barter is as old as humanity. Indeed, the concept of money itself was first instituted to assist barter. Community currency is far from new; the first central bank in 12th century Venice was based on it. During the depression of the 1930s, towns in Austria that printed their own currencies thrived while those around them were bankrupt. Now, once again, communities around the world are searching for a means to survive the pressures of unemployment and environmental degradation that have accompanied the globalization of the economy. An answer may be the local employment trading system.

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LETS was first developed on Vancouver Island by Michael Linton in early 1983 in response to the disastrous effects of a recession. At that time, the unemployment rate in the communities of the Comox Valley hovered around 25%. Linton designed a simple accounting system in which account holders could purchase goods and services, in whole or in part, by transferring points from their account into that of the seller. Linton labeled the points *green dollars* after his vision of the environmental and social benefits that would follow general use of the system.

In its first four years of existence the system recorded $350,000 of trading that would not have taken place if the participants had relied entirely on hard currency. Since then, LETS has been spreading throughout the English speaking world.

Linton based his idea on the concept that money is a form of information, a means of measuring the value of something, just as a centimeter is a unit of information to measure length. Imagine that you are going to have a house built. You have assembled all the materials, you have the necessary permits, have acquired the land, and have engaged experienced and skilled workers to do the job. But when you come on the scene to see out how things are going, you find that nothing has happened. The foreman responds to your look of annoyance. "Uh, sorry, we can't start."

"Why not?" you ask incredulously. "Well, we're all out of inches. Used 'em all up on the last house down the road. Have to wait till we can get some more, maybe next week."

It seems absurd that people might not be able to use their valuable skills because there was a lack of information, i.e. money. Yet, these days we are hearing with increasing stridency that we have to cut back on social programs at the very moment when they are needed most because we don't have enough money to pay for them.

The problem arises because money has been treated as a commodity -- a real thing that can be bought or sold -- that is scarce. Yet anyone who has ever played the stock market knows that money is not "real." If a rumor on Wall Street can affect your wealth in seconds, how real can money be? In fact, money has evolved to such an abstraction that we now see huge sums of deutschmarks, yen, sterling and dollars circling the globe in the form of electronic blips, bouncing off satellites, being exchanged for each other on the money market, while having nothing to do with what people actually do for one another.

One of the consequences of currency as a scarce commodity is that it creates rich and poor, not because of greed, but because of the very structure of money itself. If there is only so much to go around, then it is axiomatic that if one person has a lot, many more will have much less. And the more you have, the easier it is to acquire more; the less you have, the easier it is to lose it.

This situation applies equally to nations, regions or individuals. Conditions of affluence and vigorous redistribution policies slow this trend down, while recessions and tight money policies speed it up. But the mere fact that we have structures such as the income tax, federal transfer payments and foreign aid attests to the inexorable flow of wealth.

In response, Michael Linton proposed that we treat money as the unit of information that it is. Having no value in itself, it can be used freely to encourage trade within the community. Green dollars exist only as accounts held in a central computer. Account holders can buy and sell freely, unimpeded by any restrictions of the money supply.

The function of conventional money that investors think about -- the storage of wealth function -- creates the inequities that negate its use as a medium of exchange. If money is being invested to earn interest, there will be less for us to use for the things we need.

What would happen if there were a way to keep money in the community, so that it would continue to circulate? That is precisely what LETS does.

Economist Abraham Rotstein and political scientist Cohn Duncan argue that, because they exist entirely within their communities, local currencies provide a solution to the dilemma of how to satisfy the need of the state to control inflation without severely constricting employment at the local level. They do so by separating the medium-of-exchange function from the storage-of-wealth function of money. Other economists, such as Guy Dauncey and Hazel Henderson, state that because green dollars are abundant and accessible to all, LETS should be able to eliminate poverty and unemployment while augmenting current, self-help initiatives. Indeed, without networks like LETS, the current strain on the welfare system may cause such social programs to fail, leaving yet more idle capacity and unused resources.

Well, if green dollars circulate freely and stay in the community, where do they come from? One of the things we know about conventional money is that it always comes from somewhere else. If you make your own, some people in authority get very upset with you. One of the most interesting aspects of LETS is that the money is created by the very act of its use. Everyone starts with a balance of zero. So, at the beginning of a LETS system, there are no green dollars in the system. However, when the first person purchases the first item from another, then the amount of local currency agreed upon by the two traders is put in circulation, as the following example illustrates:

When I have a massage for my stiff back, I can pay the $55 hourly fee in green dollars. I make my appointment and have the massage, but at the end of the appointment, I'll telephone to have the balance transferred from my account into the masseur's. If this were the first trade for either of us, then my account balance would be minus 55, and his would be plus 55. We both would have started out with zero, but in the act of acknowledging my masseur for the massage, we have put 55 green dollars into the community.

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I have now paid for my massage; I am not in debt. Although my account shows a negative balance, there will be no interest charged or earned by anyone. At some point, I will bring my balance toward zero by doing a service for someone else or selling some product. Since I am a dentist that's easy to do.

I have also sold my old computer and assisted consensus-building workshops for green dollars. In return, I have bought crafts and meals, had income tax prepared, and acknowledged my appreciation of a fiddle player at a Christmas fair.

One important advantage LETS has over other barter systems is the ability to pay part in cash and part in green dollars for goods or services. So for dentistry, I can cover my office overhead expenses in federal dollars if I choose. The proportion of green to federal dollars in a transaction is entirely up to the parties involved.

In Toronto, the LETS that started with only five members in 1990 now has over 400 active account holders. The goods and services offered ranges from new bicycles and repairs, to handmade clothing, construction, entertainment, health care of all kinds, office work, and tarot card reading. Rural systems like the Saugeen Valley Trading System include farmers as well as crafts people. The Sudbury system, started only last year, has seen a surge of activity, with local small business becoming involved at a rapid rate. Each community defines LETS slightly differently, and adapts it to the community's particular needs.

Although there is diversity, there are many common elements among LETS. All systems are operated by members holding accounts. There is no interest accruing or owed on account balances. Accounting in most systems is done by a central administrator, who enters transactions with a readily available computer program

Since LETS programs are by agreement nonprofit and are controlled entirely by the communities in which they operate, they assist the circulation of skills, services, and goods within the community while, greatly reducing the need for federal currency. Participation in a LETS should not depend on personal philosophy, values, or ideology.

LETS programs are designed to be self-regulating in order to reduce the need for bureaucracy and the danger that the system, like all bureaucratic systems, could come to exist for its own self-perpetuation. People in the community get to know one another, who needs what and who has what to offer. Any person can also find out the balance and trading turnover of any other member, so if someone is not playing well, you don't have to play with them, providing local social control instead of bureaucratic control.

LETS is as close to a biological organism as an economic system can be. It is designed to be self-sustaining. Low administration fees pay for daily operations entirely in green dollars. Federal dollar expenses like telephone and postage come from nominal annual fees. Money for development comes from grants for specific projects. While funds for development of LETS are being sought externally, no currently functioning LETS has used external funding for administration. A LETS can operate and even thrive without development if it operates according to the self-sustaining design. Those that have depended on external funding, such as the short-lived Charlottetown system, have died when funding expired.

Most systems use some form of checks to keep track of trading and with central recording of transactions. Taxes on regular green dollar income are declarable at par with federal dollars and can be claimed as charitable donations or business expenses.

Although it is too early to see large-scale effects of LETS, advocates make two modest claims: LETS can eliminate poverty and unemployment. The social environment of. abundance engendered by a self-issued currency has already helped many people besides Jeanne to become economically more self-reliant. Regular trade fairs and potluck suppers encourage face-to-face contact and the imaginative exchange of services. At a recent event in Toronto's Bain Co-op, the atmosphere was that of a medieval marketplace.

The kinds of care-giving activities traditionally undertaken by women and currently often unacknowledged and unpaid can be used to earn green dollars. The recognition and reward at once remove the exploitative aspects of "women's work,' increase the availability of service in the community and acknowledge individual workers.

LETS is an organic economic system that is based on the needs of the local community, rather than the needs of the nation state. Money is generated where and when it is needed, without the need to attract investment that might not be in the long-term interests of the community.

LETS requires no top down intervention to work. People may participate only out of economic self-interest, but in so doing, they change the social environment from one of scarcity where people must guard their possessions for fear of losing them, to one of abundance. LETS appears to address the structural problems of money supply, without threatening the national currency.

Children understand the idea of LETS immediately. It takes adults longer because our present monetary system encourages us to look for complexity. The closer one is to the financial world, the greater the task of unlearning the complex structures required to maintain the economy of scarcity. This unlearning may be an essential part of what theologian and cultural historian Thomas Berry calls the re-invention of the human.

David Burman is a dentist who also teaches at the School of Pharmacy, University of Toronto. This article appeared originally in Peace Magazine, *published by the Canadian Disarmament Information Service.*

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WEATHER REPORT

Just politics

Bernie Sanders, Vermont's re-elected independent in Congress, bucked the trend by -- among other things -- refusing to go negative in his ad campaigns. So reports Andrew Reding for PNS. He did, however, promise to redouble his efforts to pass single payer health insurance. And his ads featured testimonials for his work on such issues as detection of breast cancer and layoffs by corporations. Sanders not only won his traditional urban centers but broke into the normally more conservative rural and small town precincts.

Drug busts

• The Drug Enforcement Administration conducted a two-day "anti-legalization" forum at the FBI-DEA training center in Quantico, VA. Police officers and others were brought in from around the country to be instructed how to beat back growing skepticism about the war on drugs.

• The Smith Kline Beecham Drug Testing Index for the first half of the year shows that nearly 8% of all workplace drug tests proved positive. That's one out of every 12 employees in America who is now defined as a criminal by our government. No wonder they're rushing to build more prisons.

• A study in Australia found that when the state of South Australia decriminalized pot possession, use of cannabis did not increase.

• A German court has ruled that cannabis is safer than alcohol or tobacco and has drastically raised the limit for consumption to be treated only as a misdemeanor. The court said that "After hearing extensive testimony from experts," it had come to the conclusion that "there are practically no objections to the consumption of hashish if it is somewhat orderly. . .Compared to the legal narcotic alcohol and to nicotine, cannabis is very much less dangerous."

Real issues

The Canadian Auto Workers Union has come out in favor of shorter work time, using a variety of approaches such as a shorter workweek, better pensions for early retirement, time off for shift work, parental leave, increased vacation, training, education and travel leaves, extended long weekends, and time off for child or elder care. *[Research Dept., CAW, 416-497-4110]*

Land of the free

A study by the Bureau of Justice Statistics has found that nearly half the women in prison in 1991 were doing time for nonviolent offenses. . . Meanwhile a GAO report on the Lexington KY federal prison found that 26 women whose mammograms revealed abnormalities were released without being told their test results, or of the need for follow-up medical attention. As of June 1993, there were only one part-time physician's assistant to provide gynecological care for nearly 2000 female inmates. And AIDS patients got to visit doctors once every six months instead of the recommended once a month.

FEEDBACK

The new mainstream

Lots of readers reacted to our exploratory chart on the differences between the old establishment and the new mainstream. A New England university president, for example, plans to use it in his American government class. And a former assistant DA in Massachusetts questioned whether inalienable individual rights belonged (as we put them) in the new mainstream: I sense that individual rights as dominant and inalienable constitutes the current establishment, and that communitarianism, rights balanced by responsibilities, is emerging as the new mainstream.

He also offered these old and new paradigms

Public servants as rulers	Public servants as servants
Representatives: those who represent an abstract will of the people which the representatives purport to discern	Delegates (those who implement an explicit and delegated will of the people)
Governors (those who govern us)	Executives (those who execute our will)

From a green activist in Maine:

National	Local
Economistic	Entrepreneurial
Policy	Practice and behavior
Regulation	Responsibility
External	Internal

From an accountant in Philadelphia:

Religious and family values represented by icons such as Quayle, Robertson etc.	Belief that there is that of God in everyone.

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An Oklahoma reader offers these thoughts: The way we elect our president sets a bad exemplar for party allegiance. Our current president is the body double for the DLC and his own ambition. A possible tonic is to move to a parliamentary system, where the chief executive must be much more in tune with party platforms and have a majority based on some sort of issues to a much great degree than our current system. Further, since much that is wrong with campaign financing has to do with the way large corporations can funnel tons of money through PACs and lobbyists, don't we need to take a serious look at improved federal regulation of corporations? Leaving the chartering of these crazy legal 'persons' to state governments is insane. We need some minimal federal oversight for these strange legal beings.

Someone who would agree with you is Richard Grossman. If you send $5 to Charter Ink, (Box 808 Cambridge MA 02140) you can get an extremely informative pamphlet on the matter -- Taking Care of Business: Citizenship and the Charter of Incorporation.

Finally, from a libertarian activist in Montana: The article was insightful and timely. The establishment is moving rapidly to consolidate power and seems to be moving in the direction of an out-and-out dictatorship. I suspect they believe they have a window of opportunity which is rapidly closing. They didn't not anticipate the information revolution, and they no longer totally control the flow of information.

The grassroots reaction is at once nationalist and decentralist. Nationalist as a defense of the Constitution and Bill of Rights against the internationalist new world order, which is viewed as an elite, multinational corporate, international banker dictatorship in the making. And decentrlaist in its defense of county/local home rule, individual rights, and state's rights.

Citizens outside the Beltway are mobilizing to provide safeguards against the encroaching tyranny. Several states have passed the sovereignty resolution, base on the 10th Amendment. Other initiatives include the ultimatum resolution, which has been introduced in some legislatures. This would dissolve the union if the budget deficit reaches $6 trillion, or if the feds move to suspend the Constitution and/or declare martial law. A refounding amendment would redefine the relation between the states and the federal government, emphasizing state sovereignty. The county home rule movement would assert county sovereignty, emphasizing local custom and culture. I think more that 200 counties have signed on. Moves are also afoot to claim federal lands for the states, based on the equal footing doctrine

In Montana and Alaska,, secession movements are gearing up. And as a final, frightening safeguard, unorganized militias are forming all around the country. Many small towns in Montana, for instances, have seen 200 to 800 people show up for organizing and informational meetings. If the federal government is not stopped short of further tyranny, we face the very real possibility of revolution or civil war. This is a grassroots phenomenon. All you need to do is walk into any bar in Montana to hear revolutionary talk.

Haiti

BCT writes: I thought your reaction to the Haiti situation might be a bit knee-jerk. Not that the US isn't there to protect its interest and keep Haitians subjugated. I agree that is definitely a motive. But Aristide *is* the elected leader there. And while the US will continue to try to make the best of the situation to further its imperialist goals, restoring Aristide was definitely a step forward of the people there. It is a far cry from Juan Bosh, Arbenz, or Allende, which are examples of how we typically respond to democratically elected leaders who try to actually help their people. I had great difficulty supporting the US invasion. But it seems like for a brief moment, the US interests happened to coincide with those of the Haitians -- short of true revolution.

ROADSIGNS

Economics

Number of jobs available in NYC: 40,000
Number of unemployed in NYC: 271,000
Number of unemployed per job opening: 6.7

Energy

Number of times the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has either waived or failed to enforce its own safety rules since 1989: over 340.

Justice

Number of the fifteen states with highest incarceration rates that also make the list of the fifteen states with the highest crime rates: 10 (DC, TX, LA, SC, NV, AZ, MI, GA, FL, CA [Justice Dept.]:

Politics

Number of people who voted in House races this year: 65 million. [Ctr for Voting & Democracy]

Number of people who could have voted and didn't: 112 million [Nicholas von Hoffman, WP]

SOURCES

Economics: Philip Harvey of the Russel Sage Foundation in the *New York Times* **Energy:** Public Citizen. **Justice:** US Justice Dept. **Politics:** Center for Voting & Democracy, Nicholas von Hoffman in the *Washington Post.*

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The Washington Times: Even ideological critics will appreciate his role as an unaligned skeptic. In an age of sound bites and increasing political homogenization, "Shadows of Hope" is an encouraging sign that independent analysis is still alive." - *Michael Rust.*

The Washington City Paper: "Smith's book really shines in the final chapter, in which he offers nothing less than a blueprint for citizen recapture of government." - *Tom McNichols*

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